

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OTRA, SHUM, BC, LT, WZ
SUBJECT: TRAVEL BY PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS TO SOUTH AFRICA

1. I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT INSTRUC-
TIONS RECEIVED FROM PEACE CORPS/WASHINGTON CONCERNING TRAVEL
BY PCV'S TO SOUTH AFRICA. I BELIEVE DECISION TO FORBID PCV
TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA EXCEPT IN CASE OF "DIRE EMERGENCY"
SHOULD BE REVIEWED FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. THE ENTIRE THRUST OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICY ON
FREEDOM OF TRAVEL HAS BEEN TO ELIMINATE OR REDUCE RESTRIC-
TIONS ON THE RIGHT OF AMERICAN CITIZENS TO TRAVEL ABROAD.
ACTING ON THIS POLICY, THE PRESIDENT LIFTED RESTRICTIONS
ON VALIDITY OF U.S. PASSPORTS FOR TRAVEL TO CUBA,
VIETNAM, NORTH KOREA AND CAMBODIA. THIS ACTION DID NOT
SIGNAL USG ACCEPTANCE OF THE POLICIES OF THESE REGIMES
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NOR DID IT MEAN THAT IT IS SAFE OR DESIRABLE FOR AMER-
ICAN CITIZENS TO VISIT THESE PLACES. IT LEFT THE CHOICE
UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL TRAVELING AMERICAN. WHATEVER THE
EVILS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID REGIME, WE CAN NO MORE
RESTRICT AMERICAN CITIZENS DESIRING TO TRAVEL THERE THAN
WE CAN RESTRICT THEM FROM TRAVELING TO CAMBODIA WHERE
GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS OCCUR DAILY. THE PC/W

INSTRUCTIONS ARE, THEREFORE, AT VARIANCE WITH THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY ON FREEDOM OF TRAVEL AND WOULD REPRESENT A RETREAT FROM OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE U.S. POSTURE ON THIS IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHT.

B. THE ONLY BASIS ON WHICH THE U.S. COULD RESTRICT TRAVEL OF PCV'S WOULD BE AS CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR STATUS AS USG EMPLOYEES. TRAVEL OF OFFICIAL AMERICANS IS SOMETIMES RESTRICTED, E.G. TO RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICAN BANTUSTANS, IN ORDER TO AVOID APPEARANCE OF CONFERRING LEGITIMACY ON REGIMES WHICH WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE. HOWEVER, NO SUCH DETERMINATION HAS BEEN MADE IN THE CASE OF TRAVEL BY USG EMPLOYEES TO SOUTH AFRICA. IF SUCH A POLICY SHOULD AT SOME TIME BECOME NECESSARY, IT SHOULD APPLY TO ALL REPEAT ALL USG EMPLOYEES. ANY OTHER POLICY IS DISCRIMINATORY AND INVITES UNNECESSARY CONFLICTS AMONG USG EMPLOYEES WHICH COULD DAMAGE MORALE.

C. POLICY IS UNENFORCEABLE AND INVITES INDISCIPLINE AMONG PCV'S. IT IS INEVITABLE THAT PCV'S STATIONED IN BLS COUNTRIES WILL TRAVEL IN SOUTH AFRICA IF ONLY TO ARRIVE AT THEIR POST AND FOR ESSENTIAL MEDICAL CARE AND SUPPLIES. UNLESS WE AMEND THEIR PASSPORTS TO MAKE THEM INVALID FOR SOUTH AFRICA (WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE, SEE POINT 'A' ABOVE), WE CAN EXPECT THAT MANY PCV'S WILL IGNORE A REGULATION WHICH THEY CONSIDER DISCRIMINATORY AND WRONG. WE ALREADY HAVE THIS PROBLEM WITH REGARD TO PCV TRAVEL TO RHODESIA WHERE A MORE SOUND BASIS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS EXISTS, I.E. WE HAVE NO DIPLOMATIC OR CONSULAR PRESENCE THERE AND ALL OFFICIAL AMERICANS ARE PROHIBITED FROM TRAVEL TO RHODESIA EXCEPT AS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED. PROMULGATION OF UNENFORCEABLE REGULATIONS IS AN INVITATION TO A BREAKDOWN OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL WHICH COULD UNDERMINE MORALE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PEACE CORPS OPERATIONS IN ALL THREE COUNTRIES.

D. REQUIREMENT THAT PCV'S AVOID TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA WILL POSE HARDSHIPS FOR PCV'S AND WASTE USG RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY WHEN REASON FOR THE TRAVEL IS MEDICAL. MEDICAL REFERRALS FROM ONE OF THE BLS COUNTRIES TO ANOTHER USUALLY INVOLVES 48 HOURS TOTAL TRAVEL TIME TO OBTAIN MEDICAL CARE WHICH IS INFERIOR TO THAT AVAILABLE IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE PERSONAL HARDSHIP AND EXPENSE TO USG IS, OF COURSE, MULTIPLIED IF PATIENT MUST BE REFERRED TO NAIROBI OR U.S. WHEN APPROPRIATE TREATMENT COULD BE OBTAINED IN SOUTH AFRICA. MOREOVER, PEACE CORPS IS ATTEMPTING TO ENFORCE THIS POLICY BY WITHHOLDING PAYMENT FOR MEDICAL TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA; THIS CONSTITUTES A FORM OF COERCION WHICH APPEARS TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH POLICY THAT NO PCV SHALL BE FORCED REPEAT FORCED TO TRAVEL IN RSA.

2. WE ARE IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH POLICY THAT NO PCV (OR ANY OTHER USG EMPLOYEE) SHOULD BE COMPELLED TO TRAVEL OR ACCEPT MEDICAL TREATMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA. HOWEVER, WE SEE NO AUTHORITY OR REASON TO PROHIBIT PCV'S FROM OBTAINING TREATMENT THERE IF THAT IS THEIR DESIRE, PARTICULARLY WHEN OUR OWN STATE REGIONAL MEDICAL OFFICER IS BASED IN PRETORIA AND REGULARLY REFERS USG EMPLOYEES TO SOUTH AFRICAN DOCTORS.

3. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, I BELIEVE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PEACE CORPS POLICY ON TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD BE PROMPTLY REVIEWED AND MODIFIED. AS I NOTED TO PCD PAYTON WHEN SHE WAS HERE, I AGREE WITH SUGGESTIO THAT PCV'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSULT THEIR CONSCIENCES BEFORE TRAVELING TO SOUTH AFRICA ON VACATION OR OTHER UNNECESSARY TRAVEL, BUT WE CANNOT LEGALLY RESTRICT SUCH TRAVEL AND SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO DO SO.
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